

In 1817, the New York State Legislature passed the New York State Emancipation Act, which granted freedom to those enslaved who were born before July 4, 1799. Unfortunately, however, this law declared that many men, women, and children could not be freed until July 4, 1827, 10 years later. While still enslaved and at the demand of her then owner, John Dumont, Isabella married an older slave named Thomas, with whom she had at least five children—Diane, Peter, Hannah, Elizabeth, and Sophia.

As the date of her release came near—July 4, 1827—she learned that Dumont was plotting to keep her enslaved, even after the Emancipation Act went into effect. For this reason, in 1826, she ran away from the Dumont plantation with her infant child, leaving behind her husband and other children.

She took refuge with a Quaker family—the family of Isaac Van Wagenen—and performed domestic work for them as well as missionary work among the poor of New York City. While working for the Van Wagenens, she discovered that a member of the Dumont family had sold her youngest son Peter to a plantation owner in Alabama. At the time, New York law prohibited the sale of slaves outside New York State and so the sale of Peter was illegal. Isabella sued in court and won his return. In doing so, she became the first black woman in the United States to take a white man to court and win.

Isabella had always been very spiritual, and soon after being emancipated, she had a vision that affected her profoundly, leading her—as she later described it—to develop a “perfect trust in God and prayer.” In 1843, deciding her mission was to preach the word of God, Isabella changed her name to Sojourner Truth—her name for a traveling preacher, one who speaks the truth—and left New York. That summer she traveled throughout New England, calling her own prayer meetings and attending those of others. She preached “God’s truth and plan for salvation.”

After months of travel, she arrived in Northampton, Massachusetts, and joined the Northampton Association for Education and Industry, where she met and worked with abolitionists such as William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, and Olive Gilbert.

As we know, during the 1850s, slavery became an especially heated issue in the United States. In 1850, Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Law, which allowed runaway slaves to be arrested and jailed without a jury trial, and in 1857, the Supreme Court ruled in the Dred Scott case that those enslaved had no rights as citizens and that the government could not outlaw slavery in the new territories.

Nevertheless, these extraordinarily difficult times did not stop Sojourner Truth from continuing her mission. Her life story—“The Narrative of Sojourner Truth: A Northern Slave”—written with the help of friend Olive Gilbert, was published in 1850.

While traveling and speaking in States across the country, Sojourner Truth met many women abolitionists and noticed that although women could be part of the leadership in the abolitionist movement, they could neither vote nor hold public office. It was this realization that led Sojourner to become an outspoken supporter of women’s rights.

In 1851, she addressed the Women’s Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio, delivering her famous speech “Ain’t I a Woman?” The ap-

plause she received that day has been described as “deafening.” From that time on, she became known as a leading advocate for the rights of women. Indeed, she was one of the nineteenth century’s most eloquent voices for the cause of anti-slavery and women’s rights.

By the mid-1850s, Truth had earned enough money from sales of her popular autobiography to buy land and a house in Battle Creek, Michigan. She continued her lectures, traveling to Ohio, Indiana, Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin. When the Civil War erupted in 1861, she visited black troops stationed near Detroit, Michigan, and offered encouragement. After the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, she worked in Washington as a counselor and educator for those who had been previously enslaved through the Freedman’s Relief Association and the Freedmen’s Hospital. It was during this time—in October 1864—that she met with President Abraham Lincoln.

Throughout the 1870s, Sojourner Truth continued to speak on behalf of women and African Americans. Failing health, however, soon forced Sojourner to return to her Battle Creek, Michigan, home, where she died on November 26, 1883.

Friends, this brief recounting of Sojourner Truth’s life story only begins to speak of her faith, courage, intelligence, and steadfastness in the face of extraordinary circumstances and volatile times in our Nation’s history. Though she could neither read nor write, her eloquence commanded the attention of thousands of Americans, both black and white. It therefore comes as no surprise to learn that among her many friends, admirers and staunch supporters were Frederick Douglass, Amy Post, Olive Gilbert, Parker Pillsbury, Mrs. Francis Gage, Wendell Phillips, William Lloyd Garrison, Laura Haviland, Lucretia Mott, and Susan B. Anthony.

The legislation we introduced pays tribute to Sojourner Truth.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE LIFE OF MR. CHARLES LANGFORD

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 15, 2007

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Madam Speaker, I respectfully request the House’s attention this morning to reflect on the life and legacy of a great Alabamian, Mr. Charles Langford. Mr. Langford passed this week on February 11 at his home in Montgomery, Alabama.

Mr. Langford was an activist, lawyer, and statesman of the highest caliber. During the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955–56, Mr. Langford represented the woman who started that protest which helped change our Nation, the late Mrs. Rosa Louise Parks, as well as the organization formed to carry out the boycott, the Montgomery Improvement Association. In 1956, the class action suit filed by Mr. Langford and his partner, Fred Gray, known as *Browder v. Gayle*, ended segregated seating on buses in Montgomery, and also became the precedent used to end all racial segregation ordinances in the United States. Later in life, Langford served two terms in the Alabama House of Representatives and five terms in the Alabama Senate.

Mr. Langford’s passing is a great loss to the State of Alabama. He helped make history in the Civil Rights movement, and played an important role in Alabama politics. I know all of us in the House today share in the loss of this great and loved man, and send our condolences to his family and our prayers that his legacy will live on long after this mournful time has passed.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO SANDY PELTYN

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 15, 2007

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor my friend Sandy Peltyn, for her work and involvement in the Las Vegas community.

Since Sandy’s move to Las Vegas in 1981, she has become very active in both fund-raising and organizing major events in the community. She is very involved in a number of organizations including: the Jewish Asthma Hospital, Juvenile Diabetes Foundation, Kids for Homeless Kids, Nevada Dance Theater Guild, Women’s Center at UNLV, Latin Chamber of Commerce Miss Nevada-USA Pageant, Mrs. United States Pageant for the Susan G. Koman Breast Cancer Foundation, Golden Rainbow, Nevada Opera Theater, Opera Las Vegas, Oasis, Veterans in Politics, UNLV School of Medicine, Dean’s Council, Clark County Pro Bono Projects, The Arthritis Foundation, Community College of Southern Nevada Fund Raising Committee, Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce, The UNLV Sierra Wind Quintet, Safe House, American Heart Association, Kidney Foundation, Nevada Association of the Handicapped and Children’s Charities.org. She has raised over four million dollars for these charities.

Sandy has also been recognized for her achievements with the International Friendship Awards by the Nevada Opera Theatre, the Volunteer of the Year Awards from the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation, the Politician of the Year Award by the Filipino Community of Nevada and the Woman of the Year by Fit for Tomorrow. In addition to all of her other community achievements, she was recently appointed as one of the five members of Medical Liability Association of Nevada and President George W. Bush appointed her to a member of the President’s Advisory Committee on the Arts at the Kennedy Center.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor Sandy Peltyn for her community activism which has enriched the lives of many in the community. I applaud her efforts and wish her the best in her future endeavors.

SOCIAL SECURITY GUARANTEE PLUS ACT

HON. RON LEWIS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 15, 2007

Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, I rise to inform my colleagues about legislation I have introduced today to preserve Social Security and pay full promised benefits to future

retirees without raising payroll taxes or further depleting the trust funds.

The facts are undeniable: demographics are driving Social Security's looming insolvency. Modern medicine is helping people live longer, and families are having fewer children. As a result, the number of seniors is growing faster than the number of workers supporting Social Security.

According to the 2006 report of the Social Security Board of Trustees, the number of retirees receiving Social Security benefits will grow five times faster than the working population over the next 10 years. Social Security tax revenue will fall short of benefit costs beginning in 2017. By 2040, Social Security revenues will be sufficient enough to finance only 74 percent of promised benefits. At that time, according to trustee estimates, benefits will have to be cut 25 percent, or the payroll tax will have to be increased by 34 percent to pay full promised benefits.

We must refocus our concern and reinvigorate our efforts to address the serious challenges Social Security programs face. This is not a Republican or Democrat issue, it's an American issue. The choices without reform are stark: massive benefit cuts, enormous deficits, or huge tax increases. We should not leave these problems for our children and grandchildren to solve.

The legislation that I have proposed, the "Social Security Guarantee Plus Act," initially proposed by former Congressman Clay Shaw and former Chairman Bill Archer in previous Congresses, would keep the Social Security safety net intact, ensuring full receipt of Social Security benefits for all current and future American workers.

The Guarantee Plus plan establishes a voluntary program that would allow workers to receive a refundable income tax credit equal to 4 percent of their annual earnings, up to \$1,000, to invest in a tax-free retirement account. Instead of restructuring existing payroll taxes, general treasury revenues would be used to fund retirement accounts. Individual workers, not the government, would control how their account assets are invested to create growth. Real assets, not IOU's, would fund promised benefits.

At retirement or when otherwise eligible, a 5 percent tax free lump sum payment would be paid directly to the worker. The balance would be used to help pay full guaranteed Social Security benefits. In order to preserve funds for retirement, account withdrawals would be prohibited until a worker becomes eligible for traditional Social Security benefits. Accounts would be inheritable and tax-free if a worker dies before reaching retirement.

The Guarantee Plus plan incorporates three core principles: all workers are treated fairly; individuals own and control their own retirement funds; Social Security benefits are guaranteed in full to all Americans through the next 75 years and beyond without increasing taxes, lowering benefits or raising the retirement age.

Because Social Security benefits are based on earnings, women are disadvantaged when they choose to stay home to raise their children. Longer life expectancies also make woman more likely to struggle with poverty in old age. The Guarantee Plus plan addresses this inequity by enhancing benefits for widows, divorced spouses, and working mothers. These benefits would become immediately available.

The plan would also eliminate the retirement earnings penalty for all workers age 62 and older and reduce the current Government Pension Offset that limits spouse and survivor benefits for certain government employees.

The Social Security Administration's Office of the Actuary estimates that every borrowed dollar necessary to begin the program, in addition to accrued interest, would be repaid with 75 years, achieving permanent solvency. In sum, we would payoff the mortgage on Social Security while leaving workers with substantial account balances and generating surplus revenues for the Federal Government.

Everyone agrees that the Social Security program is integral to the financial stability of millions of Americans who have left the workforce due to retirement or disability as well as those who are dependent upon survivor benefits following the death of a parent or spouse. We must put partisan politics aside and do what is best for today's seniors and tomorrow's retirees.

Our recent success at passing sweeping measures to modernize welfare and worker pensions shows that effective reform is possible. In similar spirit, Congress needs to work together to explore every possible option to restore confidence in Social Security and ensure program solvency for generations to come.

I believe the Social Security Guarantee Plus plan accomplishes this goal in the most comprehensive, fair, and cost-effective manner. I encourage my colleagues to consider their support for this bill as a step toward permanent preservation of the Social Security program.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION GIVING TAX RELIEF FOR THE NATION'S MILITARY FAMILIES

HON. SCOTT GARRETT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 15, 2007

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, the resolution debated this week in the House says, "Congress and the American people will continue to support and protect the members of the United States Armed Forces." Today, I am introducing legislation, the Armed Forces Tax Relief Act of 2007, and the Strengthening America's Military Families Act of 2007 that will do precisely that. Both bills would put more money into the pockets of our troops fighting in a combat zone.

Members of the Armed Forces currently serving in a combat zone are exempt from having their earnings taxed under the federal income tax. However, their pay is still subject to "employment taxes," such as the significant payroll taxes for Medicare and Social Security. The Armed Forces Tax Relief Act changes this, and truly allows our fighting men and women to keep their earnings tax free. Compared to the sacrifice that our troops make in the field, the amount we compensate them is not nearly enough. And while their sense of duty to their country is not tied to the size of their paychecks, enacting this legislation would put real extra money into the pockets of our Armed Forces, and send them a message that we are working hard in Washington to support them.

Oftentimes we forget that when the military is called overseas to fight in combat, many

leave behind a well-paying job, a family, and children. The second bill I have introduced, the Strengthening America's Military Families Act of 2007, seeks to strengthen those families at home while their spouses are fighting abroad. With this legislation, the federal income tax exemption that we currently offer to members of the Armed Forces fighting in designated combat zones would be extended to their spouses. This way, during the months that our soldiers are fighting, they can have some peace of mind that their absence at home will not be wrought with financial hardship on their families.

REMEMBERING "MR.
BURLINGAME," VICTOR MANGINI

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 15, 2007

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and commemorate the life of my dear friend Victor Mangini, who died of congestive heart failure on February 4, 2007 at the age of 88. "Vic," as he was often called, was an extraordinary human being, and a regarded educator, coach and public servant. His commitment to his adopted city of Burlingame, California rightfully earned him the title "Mr. Burlingame."

Born in Manhattan, Victor earned his Bachelor's Degree from Manhattan College and his teaching credential from Columbia University. As a young man, Victor joined the Armed Services and was stationed at the Presidio of San Francisco, where he played a key role as a training officer. Victor's commitment to our Nation's military continued after the War, as he joined the Air Force Reserve, retiring at the rank of Colonel after 37 years of service.

Madam Speaker, much like both of us, Victor Mangini fell deeply in love with the Bay Area of California and sought to make it his permanent home. The wonderful community of Burlingame located in the beautiful 12th Congressional District of California, which I am immensely proud to represent, is where Victor wisely chose to live and raise his family.

After the end of World War II, Victor Mangini moved down the Peninsula and started what became an illustrious 44-year career at Burlingame High School. During his tenure at Burlingame High School, Vic's involvement in the education and well-being of young scholars and athletes occurred in the classroom as history teacher and later as the assistant principal, and also on the athletic field, where he coached both the football and track teams. Because of outstanding and extraordinary dedication to the school, in May 2001 the Burlingame City Council voted to name the street in front of Burlingame High School after him. The high school address now reads 1 Mangini Way. That same year, Vic was also honored by his induction into the San Mateo County Sports Hall of Fame.

Vic's commitment to educating youth went far beyond his high school classroom. For over 55 years he headed the scholarship selection committee for the Frank H. and Eva B. Buck Foundation, which provides full scholarships and support to more than two hundred students seeking higher education in California.